

About Unesco

Unesco stands for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. It is responsible for coordinating international cooperation in education, science, culture and communication.

- There are 195 members and 10 associate members.
- Membership of the United Nations carries with it the right to membership of Unesco.
- States that are not members of the United Nations may be admitted to Unesco, upon recommendation of the executive board, by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Conference.
- Territories or groups of territories that are not responsible for the conduct of their international relations may be admitted as associate members. Their admission and their rights and obligations are determined by the General Conference.

NOVEMBER 1945

Unesco founded by 37 countries in the immediate aftermath of World War II.

Its purpose: "To contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture."

1974

Congress suspends US contribution after Unesco criticises Israel and recognises the Palestinian Liberation Organisation – but later rejoins.

1984

Under President Ronald Reagan, US withdraws from Unesco, saying the agency is politically left-wing and financially irresponsible.

1985

Britain and Singapore withdraw, rejoining in 1997 and 2007 respectively.

2003

US rejoins under President George W. Bush.

2011

US withdraws funding in protest at Palestinian membership of UN; arrears begin to accumulate.

Oct 12, 2017

US announces it will withdraw entirely. Israel says it will follow suit.